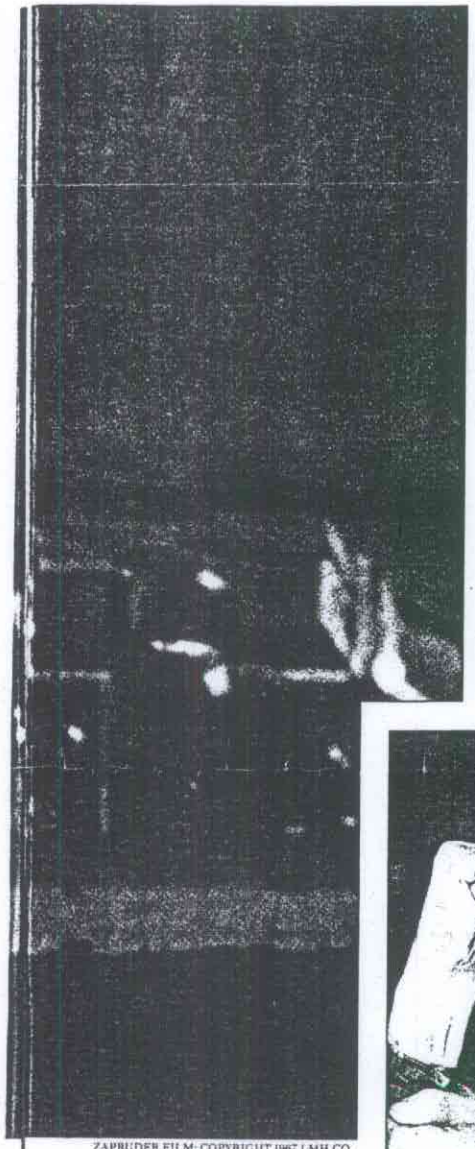

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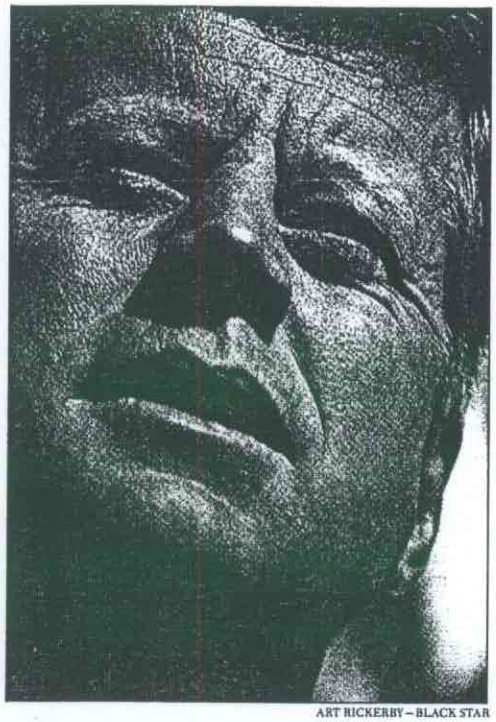

ART RICKERBY – BLACK STAR

AP

A case not closed: *The fateful motorcade in Dallas in November 1963, the young president and the assassin (right)*

Knoll will continue to spin their theories.

In an effort to resolve these mysteries, NEWSWEEK, The Washington Post and CBS News have embarked on a joint project to examine just how the U.S. government reacted in the week immediately following the shooting. The results of this investigation, which will be published and broadcast around the time of the 30th anniversary of the assassination in November, so far do not support the sinister conclusions of Stone and other conspiracy theorists. There was, to be sure, a cover-up—but probably not of a plot to kill the president. Far more likely is that officials at the CIA and FBI withheld evidence to conceal their own mistakes and keep hidden the CIA's hare-brained schemes to assassinate foreign leaders.

The documents revealed last week show the CIA scrambling almost desperately to learn whether Lee Harvey Oswald was a communist agent. The first reports that November weekend were troubling. Only a few weeks earlier, Oswald had been seen entering the Soviet and Cuban embassies in Mexico City, and wiretaps heard him dealing with a consular official who was, in fact, a KGB officer who handled "wet affairs"—assassinations. But within a few days agency officials were reasonably satisfied that Oswald's dealings with the KGB were nothing more than a "grim coincidence." KGB officials routinely posed as lowly consular officials, and Oswald's conversations amounted to nothing more than innocuous requests for a visa. The Soviet Union, U.S. intelligence officials reasoned, was not about to start World War III.

Lone gunman: The White House was understandably eager to reassure the public on that score, and Lyndon Johnson moved quickly to set up a commission that would—he hoped—find that Kennedy had been shot by a lone gunman. The CIA and FBI were ordered to cooperate, which they did—but only up to a point.

After the shooting, the FBI did a very professional job of tracking down Oswald's movements and the gun he had used to shoot Kennedy. But the FBI's legendary director, J. Edgar Hoover, was horrified to discover that his Dallas field office may have bungled an opportunity to head off the assassination. In early November Oswald sent a threatening note (the contents remain murky) to the FBI's headquarters in Dallas, but the agents there failed to follow up on it. The agent who got the warning, James Hosty, was ordered to get rid of the evidence (he flushed it down the toilet). Hoover later lied to the Warren Commission, saying that the bureau had no warning that Oswald was dangerous.

The CIA was also guilty of holding back. For three years the agency had been trying

I CAN IMAGINE WHAT THIS WILL BE! COULD YOU GET IN OUT?